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## **Making Connections: Marketing Ideas for Interpreters**

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Making Connections: Marketing Ideas for Interpreters

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### Abstract

There is a need for skilled interpreters to meet the needs of the increasingly diverse communities. Many get into the field of interpretation and translation in order to assist those with language barriers, as well as earn a living for themselves. The interpreters get into the field not realizing that to succeed they also need an entrepreneurial spirit. These entrepreneurial linguists are classified as independent contractors, as such they are responsible for the business aspects of their livelihood. This includes marketing themselves in order to grow their client base. Marketing can be a daunting task in itself. In speaking with interpreters it became apparent that many had a fear of either marketing itself and/or marketing themselves badly. The purpose of my capstone is to show some techniques that work as stand-alone marketing strategies but are stronger when coupled together. I focus on four areas that I have called silent elevator pitches. Realizing that cost could be an additional barrier, the techniques I chose have relatively little to no financial output. I decided to go with the “Action” method, the thought was that it would have more of an impact for my stakeholder to see the process in action, making it more beneficial.

*Keywords:* Capstone, Marketing, Training,

## **Introduction to your Capstone Project**

### **Section 1: Innovative Approach**

The need for skilled interpreters in the global economy and communities is increasing, yet their numbers are shrinking. As local communities become blended with the influx of immigrants, the need for interpretation continues to grow. Industries such as medical, judicial, manufacturing, sales and housing have a need for skilled interpreters that help in the localization of their clients. These industries perceive there to be a lack of skilled interpreters and in turn have sought to use interpretation applications such as Google Translate, All Language Translator, or Hi Translate. These applications lack the humanity that is often required in interpretation. In order to meet the needs of these industries and provide the localization for their clients, interpreters need to make themselves known. The cliché it's not what you know, but who you know that matters is played out here. My project is centered on helping the interpreter learn to market themselves in order to reach their stakeholders. The idea for this project came from discussions with interpreters who are new to the business side of interpreting as well as discussions with hospital administrators, attorneys, and property management companies.

Marketing isn't a cutting edge concept, it becomes innovative when you can find simple cost effective ways to do it. Either we teach interpreters how to market themselves and stay viable or we lose this vital resource in lieu of interpretation applications. The project brings together four cost friendly methods that work as a stand-alone solution or are strengthened when combined together. Part of the innovation is getting the interpreters to recognize that each of these tools is a silent elevator pitch.

Once they see how these can work together I believe that it will address some of the fears behind marketing.

## **Section 2: Emotional Intelligence**

The project I am putting together takes into account years of experience that I have had as an entrepreneur, as well as my time spent as an account manager working with international clients. I remember when I was first starting my first business I was excited yet scared, confident yet nervous. There is a fear associated with marketing, fear of not knowing what to do, how to do it, or flat out doing it wrong. I made marketing mistakes that I didn't think I could come back from. I had successful business mentors that I could turn to for advice. Having mentors was a relief, their guidance is what saved me. I am in a position where I can now offer up that same kind of mentorship. My hope is that by passing along what I have learned coupled with additional research that they will avoid the same mistakes and minimize some of the fear.

The intended audience is entrepreneurial linguists. The recommendations I am making are to assist them in getting past the fear of doing nothing and in some cases the fear of doing it wrong. By offering four distinct options for marketing that work effectively as stand-alone options, but also complement each other when combined. This allows the linguist the opportunity to decide what would be most effective for them. The options are there to help ease their fears and offer some guidelines.

The beauty of this project is that it helps to give individuals that have a skillset and are new to being entrepreneurs the opportunity to be effective at marketing without requiring a lot of time or expense. It gives the viewer the opportunity to set themselves

apart from the competition. Focusing on business cards, QR codes, websites and social media allows the linguist to make a good lasting first impression is very valuable.

### **Section 3: Creative Thinking**

When I started putting this project together, I spent time reflecting on my business past and what helped me when I first started out. From reflection, brainstorming, and research I was able to come up with cost effective ways to market using tools that build upon each other. The tools that I found would complement each other or as a stand-alone piece of marketing are business cards, QR codes, Websites, and Social Media.

Business cards can elicit a connection between purveyor and client. Some question whether a business card is even relevant in this day and age. Through my readings I found that as the world opens back up to face to face meetings that the business card still holds relevance. In my research I found that size and thickness matters when dealing with stakeholders in different countries. Additional considerations are font size and color, logo's, do you add a picture or not, and what to do with the backside of the card. There is a lot that goes into a business card, it is after all a silent elevator pitch of you.

The thought of creating a website can be quite daunting. The idea of paying someone else to create it can be overwhelming especially on a tight budget. Going through the process of creating my own website in a previous course was helpful. Taking the time to create my own professional website showed me just how easy it can be. In my presentation I share my website and provide details on the do's and don'ts of website creation.

The quick response code better known as the QR code will be new information for the linguist. Learning the process for creating QR codes and how to tie it together with business cards and websites.

For the social media portion, I reflected back on the companies that I managed their social media campaigns for and what it took to be successful.

I thought how best to present this to individuals that in many cases English is a second language. Granted the majority of the intended audience is well educated and fluent in both English and their native language. The idea of the training is to keep it simple enough that those in the minority will understand by being able to see it in action.

My approach is different in that I am tying different types of marketing together. I am providing “Do’s and Don’ts” for each type. Then how each type compliments and builds on the next. It’s unique in the sense that, when starting out in business people often think I need business cards, or I need a website, and a social media presence, but they don’t typically tie them together. Showing them the importance of having more than one type of marketing pathway working at a time and the processes that actually build on each other, and can be done with little money and expertise, can reduce some of the stress and fear associated with marketing.

#### **Section 4: Your Innovative Solution**

The approach I have chosen is innovative in that it combines common marketing techniques and ties them together. Each piece is really a silent elevator pitch, strong as a stand-alone component, but stronger when tied together. The current practice amongst interpreters is to have maybe one piece of marketing material. Combining multiple types of marketing my solution helps them to become a brand.

By considering possible language barriers, I put together a video presentation which gives a visual representation. In my presentation I actually took a calculated risk in having the participants scan my personal QR code during the presentation. It takes them to my professional website. In the feedback from those that reviewed the presentation it was very impactful. First many had not heard of or understood what a QR code was. Being able to see it in action was an “Aha” moment.

I have a link to the presentation: <https://screencast-o-matic.com/watch/crXrrOVivEQ>

### **Section 5: Results**

The emotional benefit of my project is that it addresses the fear that people feel when they need to self-market themselves. The perception is that creating a website is hard, or that social media takes a lot of time and effort. These perceptions can cause anxiety and can be overwhelming leading to inaction. Addressing this fear through example is one of the benefits. The project is designed to reduce stress by adding clarity for the stakeholders with anxiety about self-marketing. In our ever shrinking communities, interpreters help bridge the gap for those learning English while still requiring services. So many interpreters leave the field due to financial struggles. Teaching them marketing skills that allow them to make a living not only serves them, but their stakeholders as well.

The feedback was overwhelmingly positive! The biggest impact was the QR code, the respondents had seen them before, but didn't realize what they were, how they could be used to their advantage. In addition, several of them thought everything



presented would be very expensive outside their budgets. To date I have several follow up sessions planned to go more in depth with individual entrepreneurial linguists.

### **Section 6: Conclusion**

I decided to go with the “Action” method because I thought that letting my targeted stakeholders see the information in action provides a greater impact for them. What I learned when I first started this project was the reason so many people enter into the field as well as why so many leave. I learned that like any other talent one might possess, that if you're going to make a business out of it you need to know the barriers of entry. In talking with my stakeholders I found that one of the barriers has been on marketing themselves. There was a real fear in either not knowing what to do or in doing it incorrectly. I was able to hone my research skills as I decided which topics would be most effective for the stakeholders to be able to put into practice.

Honestly though the presentation was centered on benefiting my stakeholders, primarily the linguist. I found a serendipitous benefit for me. The information and presentation had elevated me in the eyes of several stakeholders, including my employer. This was a good opportunity for me to learn how to do a presentation virtually. I rarely put together presentations, so relearning some of the tools in putting together a presentation and then adding a virtual aspect to it was new for me. I also feel like I am more empathic to the stakeholders. Having gone through putting together the marketing materials through the lens of “As if” I were them seeing it for the first time. In fact, some of the information I presented was being seen for the first time by the linguist.

I chose to do a recorded presentation. I thought this would be the best way to actually demonstrate a couple of the concepts. I took a calculated risk in the presentation

which had the intended impact in both spurring questions and inspiring the stakeholders to create their own.

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